

REMARKS

Initially, Applicants would like to thank the Examiner for acknowledging consideration of each of the references cited in the Information Disclosure Statement filed on December 23, 2003.

In the outstanding Official Action, claims 1-19 were rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting over the claims of U.S. Patent No. 6,654,724.

As a preliminary matter, by the present response Applicants have amended the disclosure at page 1, lines 3-5. In particular, Applicants have amended the disclosure to update the information regarding U.S. Patent Application No. 09/249,075 (i.e., by indicating the resulting patent number and issue date).

Additionally, Applicants are filing a terminal disclaimer to disclaim the terminal part of any patent granted on the present application which would extend beyond the expiration of U.S. Patent No. 6,654,724.

The filing of the attached terminal disclaimer should not be considered an indication of Applicants' or the Assignee's acquiescence as to the propriety of the double-patenting rejections. Rather, Applicants are filing the terminal disclaimer merely to remove any issue as to whether the claims of the above-identified application and those of U.S. Patent No. 6,654,724 in any way conflict. In this regard, neither applicants nor the assignee intend to make any representation as to whether the invention defined by any of the claims of the

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above-identified application would have been obvious in view of any other pending application or issued patent or whether an obviousness-type double patenting rejection would be appropriate if the enclosed terminal disclaimer were not filed. The terminal disclaimer is being filed only to expedite the allowance of the pending claims.

At least in view of the herein-contained terminal disclaimer, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejection of claims 1-19, as well as an indication of the allowability of all the claims now pending in due course.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration of the objection and rejections set forth in the outstanding Official Action and allowance of the present application and all the claims therein are respectfully requested.

Should there be any comments or questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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